

BRIEF ACCOUNT *Page 7*
OF THE *4902 de. 9*
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L I F E
O F
Mr. WILLIAM WREN,
Late Preacher of the Gospel in YORK,
Who died AUGUST 4, 1784.

" The Gospel was his joy and song,
" E'en with his latest breath :
" The truths he had maintain'd so long,
" Were his support in death.

Y O R K:
Sold by R. SPENCE, High-Overgate. 1784.
[PRICE SIX-PENCE.]

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

WASHINGTON, D. C.

February 1, 1901

TO THE HONORABLE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

WASHINGTON, D. C.



The enclosed report of the
Commissioner of the General Land Office
relating to the proposed
sale of the public lands in the
State of California, is
herewith submitted for your
information.

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,

JOHN D. BROWN

Attorney General

Enclosure

P R E F A C E.

IT has been, and is, a practice amongst Christians of all denominations, to represent, for imitation, the lives of departed friends and servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, though dead, yet speak in the remembrance of their zeal and faithfulness for the glory of God. David says, Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints; they ought also to be so in ours, and their indefatigable labours in spreading the knowledge of salvation by Jesus Christ, should be published to the world, and their memories recorded to posterity as a memento to follow them as they followed Christ.

The relating of the dealings of God with his children is, and has ever been, found animating and refreshing to the lovers of truth and followers of the Lamb; the design, therefore, of giving an account of Mr. WILLIAM WREN, late preacher of the Gospel, is intended to refresh the minds of those who, through his ministry, were brought to the knowledge of God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, and to engage them to have

ever in remembrance those precious doctrines which he laboured so zealously to establish.

At the request of many, who experience the truth as it is in Jesus, this account is collected and presented for imitation, so far as he followed Christ.

Let ev'ry christian who this saint hath known,
Transplant his virtues freely for their own;
But if a weakness soil'd his christian plan,
Let them remember, *He was but a Man.*

A
BRIEF ACCOUNT
OF THE
L I F E
O F
Mr. WILLIAM WREN.

WILLIAM WREN (son of PHILIP⁷³ and ELIZABETH WREN) was born November 18, 1750, at a place called Kidlington on the Green, near Oxford. His father was a farmer, and he was the youngest of eight or nine children. He naturally had a remarkable quick conception, retentive memory, and penetrating judgment, but of a warm, hasty, and exceeding passionate disposition. Being of a delicate constitution, and the farming business not agreeing with him, he went to Oxford, where he got a place in one of the Colleges to take care of the gentlemen's apartments, and provide them with necessaries, which was very beneficial. He was now in the midst of temptation, and following the reigning vices of the age. One day as he was swearing a woman reproved him, which had a very good effect, for from that time the Lord, by his

Spirit, fully convinced him that he was altogether wrong and going to hell, he therefore immediately set about a reformation, bought a Prayer-book, Bible, and Dr. Watts's Hymns. The convictions of his lost state increasing he made no use of the first, but began to pour out his soul to God in private without a book : Since then he often made the following observations on prayer : " You know not God that cannot pray without a book ; God never sent men to make prayers for his church ; every one prays that knows his own heart."

He began now very diligently to attend on many places of worship, finding himself wrong, yet not knowing who was right ; and believing God had a people, he earnestly prayed to the Lord to direct him where to find them.—His convictions were increased soon after by hearing Mr. CLARK in his sermon declare, That one sin lived in, and allowed, would damn the soul." These words came with such power to his conscience, and the sense of his lost state was so dreadful, that it brought on the hysterics, which ever after, when over-fatigued in body, or distressed in mind, frequently returned.

" Oh, what a dismal state was this,
" What horrors shook his feeble frame ;
" But, brethren, surely you can guess,
" For you, perhaps, have felt the same."

Now

Now he began to be exceedingly zealous in reproving sin; knowing he had truth on his side he went forward, not fearing the face of man. The gentlemen in the College warmly opposed him, some reasoned with him; others cursed and swore bitterly, and would ask him which closet the Holy Ghost was locked in; one kneeled down, and prayed God to damn Mr. WREN's soul; and one night a company of them formed a design, and were met together to put in execution their intention after supper, which was to shake him in a blanket, or do him some personal injury, but God stopped their wicked purpose by one of them at supper cutting his hand in opening an oyster, which threw them all into confusion, and stopped their diabolical intention. His zeal and faithfulness got him many enemies, having too much religion for this place, though it appears he had not religion enough to stand a Judgment-day.

Soon after leaving Oxford he went to London, where he became a constant attender at Mr. Whitfield's chapel, Tottenham-Court Road, and was very circumspect and sincere, therefore thought himself a christian; and as nothing immoral could be laid to his charge, no person doubted it; nevertheless he did not experience the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins.

Now he had been a hearer of what is called the gospel six years, and at times was much comforted

comforted under various preachers, without knowing it essential to have the witness of the Spirit, or "The Spirit bearing witness with his spirit that he was a child of God." About this time he went to hear Mr. C. WESLEY, (whom he was much prejudiced against) who in his sermon declared, "That a Christian had a witness in him greater than the written word, for he had the Spirit which wrote the word : " He then drew this conclusion: I have not the witness of the Spirit, therefore am not a Christian ; he began to tell his acquaintance that he had been deceived ; they replied, do not deny what God has done for you ; but he persisted in the truth, that he was not a Christian, and intreated them not to deceive his soul, for he had been deceived too long.

In this state he could not rest, but sought the Lord by prayer near a week, when the Lord set his soul at liberty, by applying these words of the Apostle, HE LOVED ME AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME. The change was manifest in his countenance and conversation ; his acquaintance, who before thought him wrong when he said, I am not a Christian, were constrained to acknowledge him to be right, and that the work was of God.

The Lord, by his grace, having effectually taken possession of his soul, he became a warm contender for "the Spirit of God wit-
nessing

“nessing with our spirits that we are the children of God,” without which we have no sufficient testimony to prove our adoption, or any warrant from the Scriptures to conclude our sins are forgiven.

Being a witness of God’s adopting love, which he enjoyed without interruption for some weeks, walking in the light of his reconciled countenance, the fire of love began more abundantly to appear in love to his fellow-creatures, embracing every opportunity to enforce the necessity of being “born again.” The language of his heart was, “Come unto me, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.”

“Soon as the Spirit’s unction from above

“Throughout his soul diffus’d the Saviour’s love,

“A fire enkindled in his eager breast,

“With pity burn’d to sinners lost;

“Straight like a trumpet he his voice did raise,

“The wonders of Redeeming Love to praise.”

He visited the poor in the work-houses, his heart bleeding for sinners perishing for lack of knowledge, wishing that all might be happy in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, as he felt himself.

His friends perceiving he had abilities capable of more extensive usefulness, recommended him to Lady Huntingdon. The precise time of his going to the College cannot be

be recollected, but a letter directed to him we find as follows :

College, Nov. 16, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,

"Lady Huntingdon has desired me to
"write to you, and to inform you she is
"willing you should come to College upon
"trial.—The plan of the College is very par-
"ticular and express, requiring those who
"become members of this institution,

1. "To be experimentally acquainted with
"the total fall of man, and the utter deprav-
"vity of human nature.

2. "The Redemption revealed in the Gos-
"pel, brought home to their hearts by the
"power and agency of the Holy Ghost. And,

3. "That they are persuaded of their be-
"ing called to preach that salvation which
"they, through grace, have been made par-
"takers of.

"There are three months for trial, when
"(if approved) they are finally admitted.
"The ministerial character is, of all, the
"most important; hence the necessity of
"making it a matter of prayer.—You may
"come as soon as convenient, and appear in
"black or grey cloaths; wishing you the di-
"rection of that Wisdom that cannot err, and
"the leadings of that Spirit which leads into
"all truth, I remain

"Yours in the Gospel of Christ,

"J. JONES."

He

He must have gone soon after the receipt of the above, as by a letter from Lady Huntingdon to Mr. Morgan, of Narboth, near Havverford-West, Pembroke-shire, South Wales, we find that he was in her connection, and preaching in Pembroke-shire. She writes thus :
Bath, Feb. 5, 1778.

“ Mr. MORGAN,

“ I have received your letter, and wish
“ much to oblige you and all our Welsh
“ christian friends, but by your account I
“ greatly fear that WREN, my student, will
“ be too much fatigued for his constitution,
“ and he must have rest at the College.—
“ I know not one in the College I can yet
“ spare to help WREN, and I must desire care
“ may be taken of him while he does stay.
“ I praise the Lord for his loving-kindness to
“ you all, and I hope all will believe me
“ yours and their faithful friend,

“ S. H.”

It having pleased the Lord to call him to preach the Gospel, the word, by his ministry, was blessed to sinners, and became “ Quick
“ and powerful, sharper than any two-edged
“ sword.” Many instances were found of the good effects of these his first labours, great numbers attending his preaching wherever he came.

His chief talent was to rouse sinners with a dread of God’s judgments, by alarming the swearer, lyer, drunkard, whoremonger, unclean

clean person, and dead professor, as with the voice of thunder; he was remarkable in describing vices in their most odious colours, and representing, in a striking light, the horrors of the damned.

“ Consider ye that slight the Lord,

“ Before his wrath appear,

“ If once you fall beneath his sword

“ There’s no deliv’rer there.”

His earnestness in the cause of God, and the concern he had for the salvation of souls, prevailed to the hurt of his body, for by frequent riding and preaching when in Wales, he broke his constitution, which was never afterwards restored. The Lord made him acceptable to the people there, and the message he had from God was received by many; in consequence of which a petition, signed by some hundreds for his settling amongst them, was sent to Lady H. and is as follows:

“ May it please your Ladyship

“ To excuse the liberty I am under the necessity of taking, at the earnest request of
 “ hundreds of people, many of whom are just
 “ what the Gospel makes them to be, and
 “ the rest, I believe, are sincerely desirous of
 “ becoming such. The rough names in the
 “ inclosed list I took from the mouths of
 “ those who attended Mr. WREN’s preaching
 “ yesterday, at a small village about three
 “ miles from this place; had your Ladyship
 “ been at that opportunity, you would have
 “ rejoiced

“ rejoiced to see so many eyes fountains of
 “ tears ; such a scene I have not beheld late-
 “ ly, but I am credibly informed it is always
 “ the case wherever young TIMOTHY preaches.
 “ Mr. WREN is so universally blest round
 “ this country, that I could not deny their
 “ petition, to beseech your Ladyship to per-
 “ mit him to labour constantly amongst
 “ them—could they have had their desire
 “ they would not have suffered him to leave
 “ them, and would have made a necessary
 “ provision for him in every respect, either
 “ as a preacher in your connection, or with-
 “ out his having the least connection with
 “ any person ; but he declared to them that
 “ he could not have the most distant thought
 “ of labouring among them, or any other
 “ people whatsoever, but in the closest con-
 “ nection with your Ladyship ; and wherever
 “ you ordered him, there he was determined
 “ to go, as he had no will of his own in that
 “ respect.—But for the sake of hundreds
 “ shall I say, if I say for the sake of thou-
 “ sands I shall be within bounds, permit
 “ him to return to these poor people, the
 “ sooner the better. He that knows the se-
 “ crets of all hearts, knows I have no other
 “ view but the glory of God and the happi-
 “ ness of mankind in general ; and particu-
 “ larly in this request I must acknowledge,
 “ that I believe if God should convince your
 “ Ladyship it is his will to condescend to an-

“swer the prayer of this people, in a little
“time there will be societies of serious, hap-
“py, and loving souls established in many
“places, if any judgment may be formed
“from the many recent awakenings in this
“part of our Lord’s vineyard, solely by the
“instrumentality of this young man. In-
“deed, my Lady, it is apparent to me that
“his talents are particularly calculated for
“this country, he being a faithful, zealous,
“laborious, plain preacher, and by what I
“know and what I hear, he lives the truths
“he preaches. He is a workman that need-
“eth not to be ashamed, one that I can
“venture to affirm is determined to be clear
“from the blood of all men: In short, I
“cannot help declaring, that I am persuad-
“ed it is the will of God he should not only
“return, but abide amongst them.—My
“heart and my house is, and I trust always
“will be, open to receive him; and if, in
“any respect, I can be a means of strengthen-
“ing his hands, or encouraging him in his
“affiduity, your Ladyship may depend upon
“it, I certainly will. Wishing you to finish
“your course with joy, I beg leave to assure
“you that, with all imaginable deference
“and submission, I am
“Your Ladyship’s most obedient
“And most humble servant,
“J. BARNES.”

The

The place the above petition came from was Pembroke, in South Wales, where he laboured near a year at different times.

Lady H. did not approve of his settling in one place, and finding his health every day impaired, through the greatness of his fatigues, judged it proper to recall him to the College, and accordingly he left Pembroke-shire, February, 1779.

After staying a little time at the College he went to Froome, in Somersetshire, where (like our Lord) the common people heard him gladly; but the more prudent and judicious (so called) were offended, because he would not confine his voice within the walls of a chapel.

“ O for a trumpet-voice !

“ On all the world to call ;

“ To bid their hearts rejoice

“ In him who dy'd for all !

“ For all my Lord was crucify'd,

“ For all, for all my Saviour dy'd !

After having faithfully delivered his message in that place, he requested to return to the College : Lady H. fully approving of his conduct, writes to him thus :

“ I am quite satisfied you should leave
 “ Froome; and am much pleased with your
 “ faithful spirit and diligence in our dear
 “ and blessed Master's labours : Remember,
 “ the son that is a servant ever labours more
 “ and best ; and, I trust, this shall be found

“ your glory as well as present honour, that
 “ you so work while it is called *to-day* : Go
 “ on my good young man, let us not rest on
 “ earth till all we are and have is engaged
 “ for *the kingdoms of this world to become the*
 “ *kingdoms of Christ*. I wish you to abide at
 “ College for your temporal improvement,
 “ and to visit Monmouth, Hereford, and
 “ Ross, for your present labours ; I send
 “ down some gracious brethren for your help
 “ there next week : Encourage their zeal and
 “ faithfulness in the work, and engage each
 “ other’s prayers for much love, grace, pow-
 “ er, and the many faithful labours of the
 “ College, and believe me ever your truly
 “ faithful and sincere friend,

“ Spa Fields, S. H.

“ April 6, 1779.

P. S. “ My earnest prayers ever are for you,
 “ to which our gracious Lord does not fail
 “ to bow his merciful ear ; and, I trust, shall
 “ answer to his own praise, and the blessed-
 “ ness of you and your dear brethren.”

It appears that the prayers of the people in
 Wales had reached the ears of the Lord of
 the Harvest, for we find, through their in-
 treaties, Lady H. made them a promise of
 Mr. WREN’s return, which occasioned Miss
 LLOYD, of Narboth, (daughter of the Rev.
 Mr. LLOYD) to write the following Letter
 to Mr. WREN :

“ It

" It is with pleasure I can inform you,
 " though I suppose it will be no news to you,
 " that Mr. BARNES has received a Letter
 " from her Ladyship, with a promise of your
 " return in a short time : Oh that the ever-
 " lasting God of Jacob may come with you,
 " *and that the sound of your blessed Master's feet*
 " *may be heard behind you ;* and that, and only
 " that, will make your coming to be for the
 " better and not for the worse. The promise
 " of your return, I confess, has given me great
 " joy, especially when the blessed opportu-
 " nities, both private and public, we have
 " had together, both here and elsewhere, are
 " brought to my mind, it revives my soul,
 " and makes me cry out at times, *Lord, ever-*
 " *more give me this bread.* Oh that I could
 " pray more fervently, praise more trium-
 " phantly, and love more ardently the Head
 " and the Members of that mystical Body,
 " which, through free grace and dying love, I
 " trust I have, in some measure, room to hope
 " I have the honour to belong. I trust I
 " can truly say I have communion with you
 " at many seasons, though at this distance,
 " and can say with the poet,

" Blest be that dear uniting love

" That will not let us part ;

" Our bodies may far off remove,

" We still are one in heart."

" You are well assured that you left some
 " scores in Pembrokehire, very desirous of
 " hearing

" hearing of your health and prosperity, and
 " in that number some few here, who can
 " sincerely say that their prayer is, that the
 " Lord from on high may be with you, and
 " continue to bless you among the people
 " where, by his providence, you are at pre-
 " sent called to labour, as evidently as he
 " hath done amongst us. May you now be
 " enabled by him to go on faithfully and la-
 " boriously amongst them in his cause, nei-
 " ther courting their smiles nor fearing their
 " frowns, well knowing the one to be as
 " dangerous as the other. This from,

" Dear Mr. WREN,

" Your sincere friend in tribulation's road,

" Narboth,

ELIZABETH LLOYD*.

" March 18, 1779."

How long he was in Wales is not certain, it could only be a few months. Lady H. perceiving his laborious preaching had impaired his health, she judged it expedient for him to leave Wales, and go through England to visit the churches under her care, desiring him to preach only as his strength would permit.—When she sent him she addressed him with these words:

" Now, WREN, I charge you to be faithful,
 " and leave a faithful message in all the con-
 " gregations : " To which he replied (know-
 " ing, by experience, how few can bear with
 " faithful dealing), " My Lady, they will not

" bear

* She is since gone to glory.

“bear it;” she answered, “I will stand by
“you.” Accordingly he went forth preach-
ing *the knowledge of salvation by the remission of*
sins; a doctrine but little preached and less
experienced. God owned his labours, in
raising up many witnesses to the truth of this
doctrine.

The Rev. Mr. FRENCH, formerly a fellow-
student, writes to him thus on the subject :

“The Lord opens my mouth to speak in
“his name, and, I hope, will daily; not that
“I would desire to be a great preacher, for
“I have heard so much of it that the very
“name disgusts me; in this County, or go
“where you will, all the experience talked
“of, is Great Preachers;—and not one in a
“hundred *knows his sins forgiven*; and I be-
“lieve, some of the judicious sort would de-
“ny that there was any such thing, if it was
“not so clearly revealed, *that he who runs*
“*may read it.*”

In general, wherever Mr. WREN preached,
“The power of God was present to wound or
“to heal, to kill or to make alive;” and he
was made very useful in increasing the con-
gregations, and raising others.

He visited Oxford, and his native place,
(Kidlington on the Green) and was instru-
mental of raising a society there.

He stopped a short time in London, where
the pride and departure from the simplicity
of the Gospel, in professors, grieved his soul :

He

He preached a few times at the Chapel in the Mulberry Gardens and Holywell Mount Chapel, and from thence came down into Lincolnshire.

Travelling one day near Lincoln it rained very hard, which obliged him to stop at the first inn he came to; hearing many persons swear in the kitchen, on inquiring who they were, was informed that they were labouring men come there on account of the weather: He reflected by what means he might reprove them, praying the Lord for direction; and although he was short of money, it occurred to him to offer them half a crown, if they would let him read two sermons to them, which lay in the room where he then was (at the same time it was impressed upon his mind that the Lord would restore him four-fold); upon being asked, they accepted the proposal, and readily came into the parlour: Having gained their attention, he not only read the sermons, but took this opportunity of dealing very faithfully with them respecting their souls; which when he had done he gave them the half-crown, and they went away well satisfied.—The next day, when on his journey, he met with a man who gave him four half crown pieces; and some little time afterwards, returning the same road, was informed that two of the men to whom he had read the sermons, &c. were converted to God by that means.

In

In passing through Lincolnshire he stopped at Grimsby, and it pleased the Lord to bear testimony to his own word, making him very useful in that place. Many kind and pressing invitations he received from the people there when at York, but having too much upon his hands he could not comply with their requests.

The high opinion Lady H. had of Mr. WREN, appears by many letters to him and others, who requested of her that he might abide with them.—In one to Mr. MARKHAM, of Grimsby, she thus speaks of him:

“ Mr. MARKHAM,

“ By last night's post Mr. G. received
 “ your letter, which I have undertaken to an-
 “ swer myself, being rejoiced to have it in my
 “ power to oblige you, and all our christian
 “ friends, with the continuance of my stu-
 “ dent, Mr. WREN, some time longer.—I
 “ believe the Lord is much with honest,
 “ faithful WREN, such I have found him;
 “ his gift is that most precious one of
 “ awakening poor sinners, and this is of the
 “ most apostolic kind: My advice to him
 “ for this reason is to visit, for a short sea-
 “ son, our various churches, and I still be-
 “ lieve in this he will be most blessed in his
 “ own soul, and the Lord most honoured in
 “ his labours. Commending you all to our
 “ gracious

"gracious Lord's divine direction and protection, I remain,

"MR. MARKHAM,

"Your ever faithful friend,

"Spa Fields,

S. H.

"Oct. 28, 1779."

At the same time Mr. WREN received the following from her Ladyship :

"Knowing the faithfulness of your conduct
 "in the observation of my request to you,
 "I take this means of saying, that the visible
 "blessing on your labours at Grimsby, obliges
 "me to wish your stay there till a student
 "can succeed you; in this instance only
 "would I have you alter the settled plan of
 "your labours, visiting as many of the
 "churches as possible, or openings for the
 "Gospel. May our Great High-Priest lift
 "up those hands upon you that once gave
 "the parting, and yet remaining blessing
 "to the Disciples and to his Church, to the
 "end of time.—Wait, my good WREN, upon
 "the Lord, for the continuance of the
 "awakening gift of his Spirit; keep near
 "him for this, as the power and life of the
 "Gospel is most known by this, *of calling*
 "*sinners*. Begging many blessings ever and
 "for ever to rest with you, I am

"Your ever faithful friend,

"Spa Fields,

S. H.

"Oct. 28, 1779."

His

His concern for his fellow-sinners made him forget his bodily weakness, and readily comply with invitations from the neighbouring towns and villages: Amongst the rest he visited Barrow, a village near Barton, where there is ground to hope many received much spiritual benefit: At first he preached in a barn, but afterwards raised a subscription and built a Chapel, and being much beloved was intreated to stay with that people. He certainly deserved to be highly esteemed for his works sake, "The word," by his ministry there, "proving the power of God to "salvation."

The latter end of November, 1779, he received a letter from Lady H. to come to York; (the student who was appointed being ill) accordingly he came December, 1779, and on Christmas-Eve (so called) spoke, for the first time, from Peter's words to Cornelius and his friends, "I ask, therefore, for "what intent ye have sent for me."

His fixed attention to his Master's work led him to embrace every opportunity of doing good to souls; hence, notwithstanding the time of year and the depth of winter, he frequently visited Barrow at the expence of his health.

"Of health regardless, all things he'd forego,

"That sinners Jesu's boundless grace might know."

From

From what has already been transcribed of Lady H's. letters, the following from her to Mr. WREN may prove equally acceptable:

“I received your welcome letter in your way
 “to York; I have a letter from Mr. H. that
 “has occasioned my heart to rejoice, that our
 “gracious Lord appears for your labours in
 “York:—Go on, my good young man, as
 “one faithfully devoted in his blessed servi-
 “ces, and fear neither men or devils;—I
 “have experienced his continued mercies for
 “more than forty years in the midst of con-
 “tempt, hatred, malice, persecution with-
 “out the church; and within the professing
 “church—false brethren, treachery, ingrati-
 “tude, and greater evils than in the world,
 “*yet no weapon formed has yet prospered*, there-
 “fore can I, in the confidence of a faithful
 “friend to you, speak good of our King of
 “kings, and Lord of lords. And for ever
 “blessed be his glorious name, the Gospel
 “is flourishing and spreading from East to
 “West, from North to South, under our
 “poor unworthy labours, and this while we
 “are testifying, *That Jesus is exalted to be a*
 “*Prince and a Saviour, to grant repentance and*
 “*remission of sins*.—Mercy is our only joy that
 “will ever last, and sound in the courts of
 “heaven, by the Redeemed, to all eternity;
 “in this I would fain be foremost, to glorify
 “that mercy that could save such a poor, lost,
 “sinful soul as mine. While the Lord seems
 “to

“ bless you, I hope you will not think of
 “ stirring; let me know when you think
 “ your message is over at York, that I may
 “ have time to appoint a suitable student in
 “ your place.—I have a letter from the peo-
 “ ple you mention at Barrow; I have many
 “ heart-aching prayers from the calls I have
 “ from the fields being so white to the har-
 “ vest, and so few faithful labourers: Alas,
 “ some post-days make me ready to weep, to
 “ find any poor thirsty souls should want the
 “ waters of life, and no ministration of it to
 “ them, through want of a poor earthen ves-
 “ sel to convey them by.—Pray, pray in pri-
 “ vate, pray in public, that our gracious
 “ Lord of the harvest may thrust them out;
 “ we find none willing but such as he makes
 “ so for his work; he has many willing for
 “ their own work, and say, Lord, Lord, but
 “ such he knows not.—We have reason to
 “ praise his tender mercies; the deaths of
 “ many, in various parts of our connection,
 “ would revive the most drooping hearts.—
 “ And now, I faithfully commend you to the
 “ love, protection, and wise direction of Him
 “ who is able to make you wise in all that is
 “ good, and to preserve you blameless to the
 “ day of his appearing; in these faithful
 “ prayers for you, I, as ever, remain your
 “ truly never-ceasing friend, for the Lord
 “ Christ’s sake,
 “ Spa Fields,
 “ Jan. 4, 1780.”

S. H.

C

“ He

He had not been long in York before application was made to Lady H. for him to settle there; but so fearful was he of not being where the Lord would have him, that in a letter to her Ladyship he wrote thus:

“Madam,

“I am sorry to trouble your Ladyship
 “with so many letters, but pray forgive; by
 “Mr. H’s. letter your Ladyship will see the
 “distress of mind I must be in; I am afraid
 “to comply with or deny their request, not
 “knowing the will of God, and I would
 “curse the thought of serving him for tem-
 “poral interest; therefore if your Ladyship
 “will condescend, as a mother in Israel, to
 “give advice, I hope God will give me grace,
 “as a son, to do his will; pray do it to ease
 “the distressed mind of your Ladyship’s

“York,

“Obedient servant,

“Jan. 15, 1780.

W. WREN.”

Lady H. quite disapproved of the plan of his settling, and wrote to Mr. H. as follows:

“I cannot think of parting with WREN
 “on any account; his heart and life is in
 “calling sinners, and his gift this, and few
 “in this day are honoured in that place in
 “God’s church.”

Contentions soon afterwards took place at York, and a division of the people there was the consequence: As the dispute will not be any ways profitable, shall not enter into it, only to observe that Mr. WREN thought he did

did right to withdraw from Lady H's connection, and wrote as follows :

" —Now, my Lady, I have spoke what
 " has long laid on my mind, and have only
 " to say, it is my desire, and the people's,
 " to settle at Barrow, and to try, if possible,
 " any good may be done at York ; to this, I
 " hope, your Ladyship will agree, as it will
 " be best friendly to part, and work for God
 " and the good of souls ; this cannot be with
 " contention and strife, it is not for the glory
 " of the one, nor the good of the other."

Having raised a people, and built a Chapel at Barrow, in Lincolnshire, he made it his business (notwithstanding the distance, and crossing the Humber) to be one week at York and the other there : In this manner he supplied both places ; but the people at Barrow would not be satisfied unless he settled amongst them, that they might have preaching every Sunday : He reasoned with them, that God had blessed the plan they then pursued, therefore did not see right to alter it, while he could attend once a fortnight ; but if that would not do they must chuse a minister to abide with them, which they accordingly did, but never after prospered . Their reasoning was like the Israelites with Samuel,
 " Nay, but we will have a King over us,"
 1 Sam. viii. 19. " So the Lord gave them a
 " King in his anger, and took him away in
 " his wrath," Hosea xiii. 11.

At Barrow there was an increasing congregation, and some persons in affluent circumstances, and the Chapel likewise in his own hands; all which he gave up, and came to a few people who loved him as a messenger of God to their souls, over whom he became the pastor, and had many witnesses that Christ had power on earth to forgive sin; some in their dying moments triumphing over death, with a full assurance of their eternal salvation, through the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Through patience and faith after them let us press,

“And trace from their footsteps the highway of grace;

“’Tis now called day, but the night will soon come,

“When labour must cease, and the lab’ers go home.

In November, 1781, he opened the Chapel (built for him) in Grape-Lane, York, with a sermon from Gen. xxiv. 58, “Wilt thou go with this man?”

Having left off travelling, and being settled, he thought it expedient to marry, accordingly, September, 1782, he married Frances Mortimer of York.

After having been some time at York in the ministry, his people intreated that they might have the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, upon which he consulted the word of God, and found there was no reason to forego their earnest request. By much prayer, and weighing well what the Scriptures say upon the laying on of hands, &c. he did not

not find, in his present situation, that he could conscientiously desire any Minister, or Ministers, to ordain him, or qualify him for the administration of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, as he was over a people whom the Lord had made him instrumental of calling from the world; therefore to desire any person, or persons, to appoint him, would be a mere form void of reason: To what could they ordain him? If it was to officiate in the function of a Minister, it was evident the Lord had already ordained him to that office; and if the Lord had given him a people, certainly he had called him to every thing that was necessary for the good of their souls. One day being asked by a preacher his objections to ordination on the present dissenting plan, he replied, "I cannot find any such in the word of God; but was I going to leave York, and there was a necessity for another preacher, and a suitable person appearing to take that office upon him, then, I believe, according to the Scriptures, I have a right to ordain him over my beloved people, as the Apostles did when they planted Churches: *As they travelled they ordained them Elders in every Church.*"

Accordingly the Lord's Supper was introduced, which, in general, was a time of refreshing to many souls. One night, when commemorating the Lord's death, a person was "brought to the knowledge of salvation

“by the remission of sins.” In the celebrating of it Mr. WREN paid a strict attention to the Scriptures, knowing that every deviation from them tended to darken and destroy the very design of the institution.

The Lord having clearly made his way, and settled him in this place, the Devil was not idle in stirring up the minds of many to speak all manner of evil of him; but it was falsely: Nor was the Devil’s emissaries at the Play-house wanting in faithfulness to their master, in exposing to ridicule and contempt that which, it is to be feared, will one day cause their faces to gather paleness.

“Say, have you an arm like God,

“That you his will oppose?

“Fear you not that iron rod

“With which he breaks his foes?

“Can you stand in that dread day,

“When he judgment shall proclaim,

“And the earth shall melt away

“Like wax before the flame?

His disposition being tempered by grace, led him to be bold, undaunted, and persevering. In setting forth the love of God to sinners, the ardency of his soul discovered itself, in representing the freeness, fullness, and unchangeableness of it; ever pressing his hearers not to rest till they experience, in their souls, “redemption through the blood of Christ, “even the forgiveness of their sins,” and to be enabled to cry, “Abba Father,” by the Holy

Holy Ghost. He thought he had laboured to little purpose, if souls were not brought to know their sins were forgiven.—A friend in Wales writes to him in the following manner on the subject:

“O my dear Friend take courage, you are called to a most glorious work; However it may appear madness, or meanness in poor, blind, bewildered sinners eyes, yet, surely, nothing else is worth living for: I am glad you still insist on the *knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins*; this, and only this is the life of religion, as the body without the Spirit is dead, so is religion lifeless and comfortless without the witness of God’s love now felt in our hearts, being obtained and retained by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, having this witness, that *he loved me and gave himself for me.*”

He laboured much to inform the judgments of his people what the Gospel is; he did not think ignorance was the mother of devotion; but would have all know what they believed; and “in whom they believed,” having no idea of that faith which had not Christ for its object, nor that joy and peace which did not spring from a view of Redeeming Love. He would also have every one receive Christ as a compleat Saviour; hence, he was a warm advocate for the imputed Righteousness of Christ as the alone ground of acceptance from the time the sinner was first accepted of God,

God, to his acceptance in glory, agreeable to the Apostle's words, "As ye have, therefore, received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." Col. ii. 6.

When speaking of himself he would say, "I am the chief of sinners, but in the Lord Jesus Christ I have righteousness and strength." If the salvation of my soul depended upon my fulfilling the law of God but one half hour, I should be eternally lost.

"Oh! to Grace how great a debtor,

"Daily I'm constrain'd to be!

"Let that Grace, Lord, like a fetter

"Bind my wand'ring heart to thee!

He more fully writes his mind upon this subject, in the following letter to Mrs. WREN, when at Scarbrough for his health, in the Spring 1783:

"My DEAR WIFE,

"May the God of all grace be the support
 "of your heart and mine; I often long to see
 "you, the separation often gives me anguish
 "of spirit: But I know the Judge of all must
 "do right, I have no right to say, *what dost*
 "*thou*, since *all things work together for good to*
 "*them that love God, that are the called accord-*
 "*ing to his purpose.* Free Grace alone calls
 "us to the knowledge of God, and then his
 "purpose in providence calls us to that state
 "that is most for his glory and our good.
 "May the good Lord continue to give us
 "keeping

“keeping grace, or we shall make our election void, though called to make it sure.
 “Oh, how short I come of what God calls me to, therefore I am obliged to bless the Lord for electing his own Son to work out a righteousness for me; in him I draw nigh to God, on him I hang my everlasting all, and can often weep to the praise of the mercy I have found: I know nothing, and desire to know nothing of that Jesus (if such a one there be) that is not the sinner’s righteousness.—Give my kindest love to the people, and engage their prayers for me, and believe me, my dear Wife, to be

“Your affectionate Husband,

“W. WREN.”

The doctrine of imputed righteousness was the joy of his heart, and the boast of his tongue; but he as absolutely insisted upon the witness of the Spirit; and likewise that there was no faith without assurance, such as the Apostle speaks of in Thessalonians, “Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy-Ghost, and in much assurance.” He did not count any person in a justified state that could not adopt the same language as the Apostle, “He loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Those who sat under him the last two years of his ministry, may remember that he was lead, in a peculiar manner, to speak of God being reconciled, through Christ, to all mankind;

kind; holding forth Christ as the propitiation, or atonement, for the sins of the whole world; that the Gospel was a declaration of the glad tidings of God being reconciled, and that ministers were ambassadors for Christ, to beseech men to be reconciled to God, the enmity laying intirely on man's part.

This doctrine was blessed to many; one in his society in particular, imagining God his enemy, upon hearing him make this declaration, received the report with joy, and next morning came to acquaint Mr. WREN that the Lord had made him a witness of his adopting love. His walk ever since has been agreeable to the testimony he gave.

It is to be lamented that Mr. WREN did not leave any writings, as the Lord opened many parts of his word to him, which he delivered from time to time in the pulpit.—His friends are unwilling to attempt enlarging upon the many precious truths which were revealed to him, knowing how difficult it would be to do justice to them, or to catch the same clear ideas with which he set them forth, therefore the whole is only a brief sketch of his life, doctrine, and practice.

The following are a few things relative to his disposition, experience, and conduct, which to some may prove acceptable, especially to those who knew him.

His discourses were never studied; as his chief reading had been in the Scriptures, all
that

that would strengthen and illustrate what he advanced were immediately brought to his remembrance; his memory was naturally good, therefore whatever struck him, by reading it a few times over, became his own.

In his manner there was a natural warmth, which arose from a belief that the truths he advanced were those of the Gospel, that they could not be contradicted; hence sprung his boldness of address, &c. his looks corresponding with his words, all joined in concert to set forth an ardent zeal for souls, the importance of his message, and the dreadful consequences which would follow the slighting of it. He was an orator without study or affectation, and if it had not been for his speaking too loud, the whole of his deportment harmonized, and gave a sanction to the glorious message he was sent of God to deliver.

What he advanced upon any subject had not been acquired by much reading, study, or the opinions of other men; although of a natural quick conception, he could never bend his mind this way, nor could he force himself to meditation, unless his spirit entered into it; but when any thing struck his mind, his whole soul was engaged, nor could any other thing take off his attention, nor would he quit his meditation, until what he was upon was made clear, full, and profitable to him.

In his exhortations there was always something new, lively, and spirited, borrowing
his

his sentiments from no authors, his active spirit deriving daily from what he heard and saw that struck him, a sufficiency of matter for meditation, all which he weighed in the only true balance, *the word of God*. By this means he gained knowledge in the ways and dealings of God, and the experience of his children, so that when he met his people, (which he usually did in societies) some heart-felt experience was unfolded, that was either a word of comfort to the mourner, encouragement to the believer, or the secret windings of the deceitful heart discovered; his applications were very close, like Nathan to David, *Thou art the man*.

In his society meetings he generally gave a short exhortation upon experience, but did not confine himself to speak to every one. When the Spirit of God led him to give a word in season, he never resisted the divine teachings, by going to another person, but rested there while the subject was profitable, not thinking it right to check the Spirit, in order to have an opportunity to speak to all. The same rule he observed when preaching, in following the leadings of God's Spirit, which he preferred rather than the connection so many professors are fond of; nevertheless, when he chose, (without much study) no one could preach more regular discourses, his reasonings being conclusive, as well as affecting and nervous, appealing, as he went along,
to

to the understanding of his hearers, bringing the important truths he wished to enforce so close to their consciences, that he often commanded the attention of a very large congregation; and if one might judge, by the solemn awe wherewith their countenances seemed impressed, they thought of him, as of old they did of our Lord, "This man teaches as one having authority, and not as the Scribes."

In the last two years of his life the Lord more abundantly opened his word unto him, and he saw a depth into many parts of the Scriptures that he had never before discovered, particularly in the riches of God's grace to the Gentiles, of which we are a part. Those places in Romans that relate to them were made known to him, seeing more than ever he had done, the freeness of God's grace to all mankind. Neither did it require, in his judgment, a length of time to be partakers of the benefits the Gospel contained; as it is related in the Acts of the Apostles, when Jesus was preached to the people as the Friend of Sinners, and their state, by nature, laid open, they were pricked to the heart, believed and rejoiced under one sermon.—It was his opinion more instances might be experienced of the same in this our day, if it was more fully shewn that the enmity lay on man's part; on God's, nothing but love.

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Those

Those persons he regarded poor readers of the word of God who needed the Bible always before them; he was considering it in his mind all the day, even when walking in the streets, and could often say, with David, "In the night and morning watches that he " was meditating upon the law of his God."

He was singular in opening the Scriptures, never declaring the meaning, positively, without the Lord had taught him; but when this was the case, he spoke in a determined manner, staking the salvation of his soul upon the truth he declared. Although he was fluent in speaking, it was a rule with him never to converse upon subjects he had not before considered, or that he had a knowledge of, in a greater or less degree; he often blamed persons who were desirous of setting themselves off, by a pretence to that literature of which, in reality, they were not proficient.—In speaking, a particular attention, he thought, ought to be observed in watching the Spirit's motion, so that our words may carry grace, weight, and light along with them. When his mind was composed and unprejudiced, he could discern the spirit of most people with whom he conversed.

It was his desire to establish his people in the truths of the Gospel; and was also particularly careful, when the foundation was laid, "Christ in them the hope of glory," that they should derive all their life and strength from

from "Him, the only true and living vine." The fear of losing sight of Christ, was a continual subject of his exhortations, both public and private; nor did he relish any sermons wherein the Saviour was not held forth, or approved of any experience spoke of in the pulpit, or elsewhere, where Christ was not always kept in view.

The warmth of his disposition drew his mind often from the sacrifice; he was not long, however, before he was restored. What he had lost was Christ; that which he wanted was to have a sense again of his presence. He never looked to be restored by little and little, but saw clearly that an act of faith in the blood and righteousness of Christ, would unite him again to his Saviour: By acting according to this light, though he was frequently moved from the Rock, he had as often to praise Redeeming Love for placing him thereon again. It was easily discerned when he walked in the light of God's countenance; his spirit, soften'd by love, and brought into subjection to divine grace, threw a lustre upon his whole deportment, as scattered awe and reverence to all around him.—In these frames the language of his heart, and subject of his tongue, was intirely upon the riches, mercy, and free grace of God; his Saviour was all in all to him, he was nothing; all was mercy to him, an undeserving creature: Christ was the sole theme that he dwelt upon, and his

happy soul seemed never wearied (notwithstanding the weakness of his body) in expatiating upon the beauty and loveliness of his Redeemer, who to him was an all-satisfying portion, and with whom he was desirous every one should be attracted; and often repeated,

“ Oh ! for this love let rocks and hills

“ Their lasting silence break ;

“ And all harmonious human tongues

“ The Saviour’s praises speak.

Much, at times, he experienced of deep communion with his God; he has often related his having enjoyed such a weight of his love, that his weak body was hardly able to sustain.—A little before his last illness his friends were witness to the effect something of this nature had upon him; for one evening, in overhearing him at prayer, they could discover, by his earnest pleadings, that his soul was engaged in deep and close intercourse with his God. When he came to them he related what had passed; which was, that, joined to a sense of the Lord’s goodness, he experienced from him such a tender reproof as melted his very soul; he found Jesus had not hitherto been sufficiently set forth by him, and that the Lord had shewn him how much it was his will, that his Son should be honoured in the world:—Through grace, he said, it was his full determination to preach and speak of his Saviour more than he had ever done. At this time his whole frame
was

was so affected, that for many hours he had the appearance of a person near unto death.

He believed a minister's work was not done when he came out of the pulpit, therefore, in his visits to his people, he, for the most part, took particular care to check all conversation that was not attended with a favour of divine things: These meetings were truly edifying, no one hardly ever interrupting him; on the contrary, they seemed to listen with delight to his instructions, and to the many precious things which he spoke relative to his Master's kingdom. His people were accustomed to his speaking very plain to them, no obligation exempted them from the discipline he saw necessary, nor from the reproofs, from time to time, they required.—His temper was naturally open, therefore any thing that was upon his mind he rarely concealed, speaking to, or of persons without any covering; he would have the whole to be known and then, as he observed, there could be no after-claps; his aversion to the least appearance of guile, or dissimulation, might be a reason for the unreservedness with which he treated every one. He was constantly tracing, in those who were near him, those roots of bitterness, and drawing them forth to view in all their odious colours, that they might hate, and never rest till the Lord had taken them away. The quickness of his parts was a help to him in deciding questions relative to his people

and others, but more abundantly was he assisted by making the Scriptures his guide; he never desired his people to pray to be directed in things, when there was a plain rule in the word of God to go by, but for power to do the will of God. All the arguments that persons could use to favour their inclinations, however plausible they appeared, their answers to prayers, impressions, providences, &c. had little weight with him, if the Scriptures were not in their favour. When persons went contrary to his opinion thus warranted, he used to say, "Without being a prophet, or the son of a prophet, such things will be the effect of their taking these steps," which generally proved the case.

His strict attention to the word of God, and the impropriety of those who did not adhere to it, immediately struck him, that he had not long to meditate how far they had erred. A person telling him one day that he had been sharply reproofing his Minister, Mr. WREN asked the effect it had upon him; to which he replied, that it had no more weight than if he had been speaking to the wind (or words to that effect). Mr. WREN told him it was no wonder, seeing he had not acted according to the Scripture rule, which commands not to rebuke an Elder, but intreat.—He was for having every one maintain the place God had appointed them, enforcing the necessity of
keeping

keeping the power the Lord intrusts us with; for many of the evils with which persons are perplexed, in his opinion, arose from not following this method.

He was of a very delicate frame of mind, and so steady in his attachments, that when once formed they hardly ever changed; this peculiarity in his disposition caused him many exercises of mind, as his affections were strong, they were soon wounded. The Lord saw fit to try him in this quarter, that his affections might be wholly fixed upon God, loving the creature in him: His anxiety was so great for those he thus loved, that all his powers were engaged to bring them to be of the same mind with himself in doctrine, practice, &c. but herein he did not always succeed; the uprightness of his intentions, even in this part of his conduct, no one, that was well acquainted with him, could dispute; but his friends could not help observing, how much the desire of success prevented his leaving it in the hands of God.

His disposition was strikingly blended; the impatience of his spirit in little things, was discovered in the hastiness he shewed to have them executed; but in concerns that were of moment, Grace had so far rectified his heart, and the fear of not acting agreeable to the will of God was so much impressed on his mind, that he seldom determined any matter of consequence without much prayer to the Lord, consulting

consulting his word, and attending to his providences; hence his judgment could rarely, with truth, be contradicted.—He was fully convinced, that nothing short of being governed by the Scriptures, was giving up our wills to God. At times he would follow impressions, if not contrary to any express command, and was seldom disappointed of their answering some good end.—When in Wales it was strongly impressed on his mind to preach at a place called St. Govin's Well, famous for the cure of some particular disorders; it might appear wildness, to many persons, his going there, as there was no town within several miles, and the place quite open to the sea, and at the bottom of a great rock; he, however, published preaching, and there was an uncommon number of people gathered together from the adjacent parts; his text was, "Rocks fall on us," &c. Rev. vi. 16, 17. The power of God attended the word, for many souls were convinced, and amongst the rest a man (providentially bringing his son that day for the benefit of the well) who had been a violent opposer of the Gospel, so as to prevent a place being opened for preaching, found such convictions, that, at his return home, he gave liberty to have it appropriated for that purpose, and Mr. WREN had permission to preach there: From that time the word in Pembrokeshire run and was glorified, and all opposition fell before it; wherever he went in-

creasing

creasing numbers attended; and, as it is observed in the petition from thence to Lady H. "Many eyes were fountains of tears," so mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed. Likewise at Froome, it was impressed on his mind to preach out of doors, being persuaded that one person, or more, would be awakened, he mentioned his intention to some, who objected to it, as he had a Chapel there; the success, nevertheless, justified his proceeding, he being instrumental, by that sermon, of bringing a woman to the knowledge of her lost state, who came to him afterwards with tears confessing it. It is certainly enthusiasm to follow impulses, when contrary to a plain direction in the word of God, yet, when they do not contradict it, matters of fact shew that they are not always to be rejected.

A considerable while before he declined preaching, he was constrained to sit during the time; but his spirit was so much in the work that he intirely forgot all his complaints, and exercised himself above what his strength would admit, that it had the effect of contributing greatly to the confirming of the disorder that carried him to the grave, which was a consumption; but his heart was so engaged in the cause he had in hand, that his body and every thing else gave place to the desire he had of being instrumental, in the hands of God, for good to precious souls.

He

He continued to preach till the latter end of February, 1784.

After having had the advice of the Faculty in York, by his own desire he was removed to Helmsley, to be under the care of Mr. N—s, who, knowing his value as a Minister of the Gospel, joined to his affection for him as a friend whom he truly loved, left no means untried to abate his disorder, and it was his study, day and night, what medicines might prove beneficial to him. After he had been there some time, Mr. WREN enjoined him to tell him what he really thought of his case, and was, by Mr. N—s, informed that it was dangerous—which he heard with great composure of mind. The views which he had of departing, and being ever with the Lord, filled his soul with the most exquisite delight: One day while he was there, as he lay in silent meditation, tears gushed from his eyes, and he broke out—

“ O what hath Jesus bought for me !

“ Before my ravish’d eyes

“ Rivers of life divine I see,

“ And trees of Paradise.

He added, “ Christ is Salvation—he alone is
“ Salvation—God is become my Salvation !”
He then spoke much of God’s love to his soul, and what he had then revealed to him ; and observed, that he had formerly chose, for his funeral text, “ Is not this a brand plucked
“ out of the fire ;” but that his mind was now
changed,

changed, and he requested that it might be, "God is become my Salvation," as these words were (at that time) as a cordial to his spirits, under his extreme pain and weakness.

After having been at Helmsley some weeks, and there being no visible appearance of his recovery, he wished to be removed to York, and accordingly took leave of his friends; the scene was truly affecting, each expecting to meet no more till the morning of the Resurrection. Mr. WREN was overcome with a sense of the kindness that he had received at the hands of Mr. and Mrs. N—s, who, on every occasion, offered their friendly assistance: When he came to the door, he said, "There is the chaise to take my body to York, in a little time the Lord will send his chariot of love and say, step in, and then I shall be driven home."

During his illness he was much tempted to fretfulness, even with those he loved the most; this often discomposed his mind, and greatly added to his nervous complaint. It is not uncommon, even for the best-tempered people, when under the influence of the same disorder, to feel themselves exercised upon the most trifling occasions: And when the extreme weakness and pain of body, together with a strong nervous habit which he laboured under, is considered, no one can be surprized that the enemy of souls sometimes led him to be dissatisfied with those that attended him.

Notwithstanding

Notwithstanding all his afflictions and trials, the Lord, at times, in a peculiar manner visited his soul; but his weakness was so great that he could not bear the conversation of his christian friends so often as they wished; there were, nevertheless, seasons when he spoke to them of his present happiness and future prospects, which afforded them much satisfaction, and dispelled every doubt concerning his everlasting welfare. A person who sat up with him, asked him if he felt his God in the midst of his afflictions;—he answered, “I not only find that he is my God, but that he is my Buckler and Salvation, and all that I, a poor sinner, want.” One time, when alone, he was over-heard to repeat the following lines, with much solemnity and composure of mind; they express a sense of his own acceptance, and the strongest assurance of eternal Salvation :

“ We two are so joined,

“ He’ll not dwell in glory

“ And leave me behind.

And repeated many times over,

“ He’ll not dwell in glory

“ And leave me behind.

The above words Mr. WREN often took notice of, as having been powerfully impressed upon his mind at his conversion, immediately after the Lord had set his soul at liberty; he frequently repeated them with pleasure and delight, but did not know what book they

they were in, till accidentally a person, some years afterwards, desiring the hymn to be sung; when they came to that verse, he was so elated, that the company joined with him in singing it over and over for a considerable time together. Mr. WREN has observed, that in Wales it is not an uncommon practice, at their public meetings, to sing one verse for an hour or more without intermission.

After he had been some weeks at York, he thought himself something better, and had a desire to go to Scarbrough, as he had found it beneficial in the Spring, 1783, and accordingly he was removed thither. At first the change of air abated his sweats, but his cough and spitting increased, and he daily grew weaker, so that his removal to York became impracticable, although much wished for. In his illness he was visited by several Ministers and friends, whose kind attention (when he could bear company) often alleviated his painful hours.

The anxiety of his dear people at York for his recovery was shewn by their frequent inquiries after his health by letters. The following is part of one:

“ I received your letter, with an account
 “ of Mr. WREN being much weaker in body,
 “ but I have much satisfaction to hear that he
 “ is happy in his soul; I find much pleasure
 “ in praying for him, my soul is much refresh-

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"ed by it. His memory will be ever dear to
 "me, as a messenger of God to my soul.
 "Many of us may say, blessed be the day we
 "heard him. We find it hard to say, *the*
 "*will of the Lord be done.* I hope that I shall
 "soon be through this vale of tears, and land
 "in a better country—I trust, I there shall
 "see my Minister, if I never see him any
 "more here. It would have given his peo-
 "ple, as well as me, satisfaction to have seen
 "him here, but the all-wise God knows
 "best."

A person who went from York, on pur-
 pose to see Mr. WREN, upon inquiring the
 state of his soul, he replied—That he was
 not then very lively, nevertheless he could,
 with confidence, declare that his whole de-
 pendance was upon Jesus Christ and his
 Righteousness. I can, he further said, ven-
 ture my never-dying soul upon that one offer-
 ing made without the Gates of Jerusalem;
 and added, give my love to the people,
 (meaning his people at York) and tell them,
 if the Lord should restore me, I shall preach
 no other Gospel to them than that which I
 have already preached—and I can die upon
 the truths I have delivered. Many other
 things he said at that time, the substance of
 which was, that his whole dependance was
 upon Christ for Salvation. He spoke to the
 same effect (respecting preaching the Gospel)

to another of his society, who went to see him.

The Rev. Mr. B. of Sheffield, made him a friendly visit during his illness at Scarbrough. This friend Mr. WREN much valued, and often spoke with pleasure of the profit he received whenever he heard him preach. While Mr. B. was in prayer with him, these words, "I am thine and thou art mine," were applied to his soul with such comfort, that he mentioned the circumstance next day with peculiar satisfaction; but observed it had occasioned some reasonings in his mind, the words not being the exact words of Scripture; but considering them a little, he saw the propriety of the Lord thus applying the above words.

Mr. B. in a letter to Mrs. WREN, soon after he left Scarbrough, writes thus, taking notice of the above circumstance:

"I received your kind letter in due time,
 "which gave me much pleasure, in that my
 "dear friend and brother, Mr. WREN, was
 "not worse, but better when you wrote.—
 "My prayer is, *O spare him*; but who am I,
 "that I should give counsel to the Holy One,
 "*he is the Lord*, his thoughts may not be as
 "mine; yet with submission dare ask, but
 "must say, *Thy will be done*. The Lord gave
 "you a husband and me a brother in him,
 "and if he takes away, who dare say, *What*
 "*dost thou*: Sovereignty is his right, and his
 E 2 "alone;

“ alone; as creatures we own in word, as
 “ christians let us confirm it in deed. Bought
 “ with Blood and saved by Grace, surely we
 “ are *not our own*. May the good Lord sup-
 “ port you with patience, and continue to you
 “ the blessing of a resigned will under this
 “ providential dispensation: The Lord has
 “ his way in the whirlwind and in the
 “ storm, and these clouds are but the dust of
 “ his feet; follow the cloud without fear,
 “ God is in it, hear his voice, *It is I, be not*
 “ *afraid*; let all thy wants lie on me. *In*
 “ *every thing make your request known unto God*
 “ *with thanksgiving*: The Lord will make
 “ darkness light.—You say Mr. WREN says,
 “ *I shall see God*; the reason of this immor-
 “ tal hope is, that he knows, with Job, that
 “ *his Redeemer liveth*; and that the Lord said
 “ to his soul, *Thou art mine and I am thine*.

When Mr. WREN was able to see his
 friends, the principal theme, and what he
 dwelt the most upon, and gave him the
 greatest pleasure, was, Reconciliation to God
 by Jesus Christ.

Conversing very lively upon the things of
 God with Mr. HAGUE, about a fortnight
 before he died, seeing a near friend by the
 bed side, he said to Mr. H. (looking with
 much affection at the person) I would give
 this arm, which he stretched out, if that per-
 son did but see and feel as we do the truths
 we have been speaking of; referring, parti-
 cularly

cularly to the imputed Righteousness of Christ; which, he would often observe, he saw not how a sinner could be justified without: Nevertheless, he believed many were in a state of justification, that did not understand the term imputed.

“How much this truth he urg’d can many say;

“How pleas’d he dwelt thereon from day to day:

“From his freed soul flow’d ev’ry Gospel-thought,

“For he experienc’d what he preach’d and taught.

He had always expressed a desire of laying in the Chapel at York, but being at such a distance he thought it would be attended with too great an expence, and therefore asked Mr. H. one day, if he would bury him in his burying place; adding, if he was buried there, That ground was never opened for so vile a creature.

About a week before his death, Mrs. WREN said to him, I think, my love, that you are weaned from us all; you seldom mention, or take notice of your nearest friends, (mentioning herself and them by name) or your Church, which you used to speak of with so much pleasure: He answered her, It is not for want of affection to you all, but you see, my love, I am going home.

These lines, which he had often repeated; he now appeared to experience:

“My God is return’d to glory on high,

“When death makes a passage then to him I’ll fly;

- " And gladly will leave all my brethren behind;
 " Expecting in glory we all shall be join'd;
 " My spirit rejoices, the work it is done;
 " My soul is redeem'd, Salvation is won."

At another time he observed to Mr. WALKER and Mrs. WREN, that the world was no more to him than if he had never been in it, and that he now was as though he had never had any thing to do in it; adding, all men have an object wherein their hearts center, so have I, and *only one*, which is Christ.

The two following lines he much admired, and often repeated:

- " How can I sink with such a prop,
 " That bears the world and all things up!

The following letter was sent by Mr. B. of Sheffield, to Mr. and Mrs. WREN, at Scarborough, dated a few days before Mr. WREN's death, which, it is hoped, will be acceptable to the friends of the deceased:

- " My dear Friends,
 " I have just received your afflicting, yet
 " pleasing letter; let this bring you my
 " thanks for your last favours; am sorry to
 " hear Mr. WREN, my old friend, is still
 " worse, nothing, surely, but heaven is for
 " him: Is it not enough? Happy the soul
 " when on the borders of the Land of Pro-
 " mise; one sweet gale or two more and he
 " enters the harbour of that good land, *where*
 " *sorrow and sighing will be done away*, where
 " every

“every thing and every one flourish in a perpetual bloom: Can it be otherwise, when Jesus, the Lamb, is the light? But happier they that stand before his face; your husband's lot is there depend on it. *Death is swallowed up in victory*; a confirmation is given him, in the comforts of the Holy Ghost that he enjoys, and the world being to him as if he had never been in it, his language must be,

“The world recedes, it disappears,

“Heaven opens to his eyes;

“His ears with sounds seraphic ring:

“Lend, lend your wings—he mounts, he flies.

“O Grave, where is thy victory!

“O Death, where is thy sting!

“My dear love to Mr. WREN, pray tell him that he will find need for *Faith and patience to the end*: Faith to believe in and trust his God, for the fulfilling his precious promises; and Patience to wait his time, of eternity, for the fulfilling of them: Surely it's but a little while; how did our dear Lord check the drowsiness of his disciples: *What, cannot you watch one hour?* Knowing himself that the time was at hand; and surely it's not far off,

“When the opening heavens around us shine

“With beams of sacred bliss:

“And Jesus whispers thou art mine,

“And tells me I am his.

“Such

“ Such, you know, is the case of dear Mr.
 “ WREN, your husband: In this I flatter
 “ myself you rejoice; surely there is a cause,
 “ though the sight of death at a distance ren-
 “ ders himself to us as an enemy, when we
 “ see him as men see trees as walking; but
 “ when we come to feel his dart, *knowing that*
 “ *our Redeemer liveth*, we cry to the seeming
 “ monster, Thou art conquered! and what
 “ makes the conquest great to us is, it's done
 “ by Blood! And, as Young observes, *The*
 “ *Blood of him I made my foe!—The Lord gave,*
 “ *and he has the same right to take away*; a con-
 “ tinual resignation of spirit is worth a world
 “ of gold, more to be desired than rubies.—
 “ My kind love to him once more; surely I
 “ shall see him on Mount Zion.

“ Let my good brother cast his soul into
 “ the arms of an all-sufficient Saviour for
 “ Glory, as he did for Pardon: Surely St.
 “ Stephen did it when he said, *Lord Jesus re-*
 “ *ceive my spirit*. There is no other way: *It's*
 “ *the way of Faith that we preach*.”

The Rev. Mr. B. of Scarbrough, was with
 Mr. WREN a few days before his death: He
 spoke to him as one upon the verge of eter-
 nity; Mr. WREN, through extreme weak-
 ness, was unable to say much, but upon Mr.
 B's inquiry of the present frame of his mind,
 he gave him to understand that *all was well*
with him.

Mr.

Mr. H. also of Scarbrough, came to visit him a day or two before his death. Mr. WREN addressed him thus : Now, Sir, if you see any thing wrong in me, tell me of it, signifying that he was a dying man, and wished not to be deceived : Mr. H. intimated he saw nothing wrong, and asked him how he felt himself—He replied, “I am going.” Mr. H. then asked him if he was afraid to go :—He answered with unshaken confidence, No ; and with a smile said, “I wish to be gone,” and with delight and warmth repeated,

“ Why should I fear the darkest hour ;

“ Or tremble at the Tempter’s pow’r,

“ Jesus vouchsafes to be my tower.”

Mr. H. observed, he never, at any time, heard Mr. WREN say that he was afraid to die, but, on the contrary, always expressed that he had no fear of death ; neither did he, or any other person, ever hear him complain that the Lord had laid a heavy affliction upon his body. He observed to Mr. H. the day before he died, that he should soon be at home.

On the day Mr. WREN died, Mrs. WREN having left a person with him while she went down to tea, he spoke quick, Where is my wife, implying they were to call her immediately ; as soon as she came into the room, and before that she knew he was dying, these words were several times brought to her mind : “ This day he shall be with me in Paradise.”

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When she came to the bed-side she found he was dying, and ordered Mr. WALKER to be called; Mr. WALKER observing likewise that he was dying, was scarce able to speak for grief, but asked Mr. WREN if all was well with him; to which he replied, All is well, and desired to kiss him. Mr. WALKER then said, Now, dear Sir, you are going, do you experience the power of those truths you have so often declared to us? He replied, Christ is Salvation. He desired also to kiss Mrs. WREN: She asked him if he was happy; he answered, with all the sweetness and composure imaginable, You see I am happy, God is mine. These were his last words, for about an hour and a half after he fell asleep in the arms of that God whose he was, and whom he had served, which was about Eight o'clock in the evening, Aug. 4, 1784, in the 34th year of his age.

Mrs. WREN observed, that when he was dying the Lord was in a particular manner present; that he gave her such a strong assurance of his Salvation, as made her intirely happy and resigned during the time. Several texts of Scripture were brought to her mind; the power that accompanied them shewed they came from the Spirit of God, testifying to her that he was going to glory; and these divine consolations continued till he died.

The

The following letter (from a pious friend of both Mr. and Mrs. WREN) was sent to her immediately after Mr. WREN's death:

" Dear Mrs. WREN,

" The peaceful departure of your husband
" and my friend, was what was to be expected
" from his firm faith in God his Saviour; a
" faith which had not led him once or twice,
" but many, many times over, to venture all
" things which this world or the favour of his
" fellow-creatures were worth. His life, ever
" since I have known him, was one giving-up
" of this world and all things in it, in the
" plainest manner; and a willingness to suffer
" all things, that he might not hinder, but
" forward the great interests of the Gospel of
" Christ in the world. He was no trifler, he
" wanted to pull down the strong holds of
" Satan, in the minds and habits of those to
" whom he spake. He had a vigour of soul
" and plainness, which put it out of all doubt
" whose servant he was, and what end he lived
" for. I thank the gracious Disposer of all
" things, that, by his providence, I ever knew
" your husband: And I have no doubt but
" you will have cause to thank, to praise, and
" adore the blessed Giver of all our mercies,
" both while you live and for ever, that you
" was ever connected with this sincere servant
" of the Lord.

" HULL,

T. P.

" Aug. 10, 1784."

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The loss which his Church has sustained, can only be conceived by those who have been in the same situation; the affection which subsisted between him and his people, when living, made them desirous that his remains might rest amongst them, accordingly his body was removed from Scarbrough to York. The Rev. Mr. B. had engaged to preach the funeral Sermon, but being gone to London, Mr. ALDRIDGE, who came to supply his Chapel at Sheffield, also supplied his place to discharge the last duty to the remains of Mr. WREN, which was on Sunday, Aug. 15, 1784.

The concourse of people was so uncommonly great upon this solemn occasion, that (without any previous intention) the corpse was obliged to be set down at Thursday-Market Cross, where Mr. ALDRIDGE preached the funeral sermon, judging it impracticable to get into the Chapel. He made a very affecting address to the people, representing them and Mr. WREN before the Judgment-Seat of Christ; likewise that he, probably, would be a swift witness against many who had frequently been warned by him "to flee from the wrath to come:" Also shewed how Mr. WREN set before them their danger, and also their remedy; and that, if they had received his message, they might have experienced, with the deceased, "That Christ was become their Salvation." Mr. ALDRIDGE also took notice of the indefatigable labour which

which he bestowed on this great City, in order to bring souls to the knowledge of Christ; likewise how he had spent his strength in the cause of God.

It is very remarkable that Mr. WREN preached his first sermon out of doors in York, at that very Cross where this last sermon was preached for him: The text then was, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." 1 Tim. i. 15. The text which Mr. ALDRIDGE preached from at the funeral was, "He also is become my Salvation. Isa. xii. 2. The corpse was afterwards carried to the Chapel, where Mr. ALDRIDGE spake a few words, committing the body to the ground, there to rest till the morning of the Resurrection.

From the many testimonies already given of this servant of God, every one who impartially considers his character and conduct, must be constrained to acknowledge that God was with him. It is evident he sought not his own advantage, either with respect to health, ease, profit, or the esteem of man. To those who knew him, little need be said in his favour, their consciences must testify that he ever treated them with the greatest plainness, simplicity, faithfulness, and uprightness. But to such as despised his warnings, &c. and treated all experimental religion with contempt and ridicule, they would do

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well

well to consider that they, with him, must
 “stand before the Judgment-Seat of Christ.”

Rom. xiv. 10. “When the Lord Jesus shall
 “be revealed from heaven with his mighty
 “angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on
 “them that know not God, and that obey not
 “the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who
 “shall be punished with everlasting destruc-
 “tion, from the presence of the Lord and from
 “the glory of his power; when he shall come
 “to be glorified in his saints, and to be ad-
 “mired in all them that believe—in that
 “day.” 2 Theff. i. 7, 8, 9, 10. “Then shall
 “the righteous man stand in great boldness;
 “before the face of such as have afflicted him,
 “and made no account of his labours. When
 “they see it, they shall be troubled with ter-
 “rible fear, and shall be amazed at the
 “strangeness of his Salvation, so far beyond
 “all that they looked for. And they repent-
 “ing and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall
 “say, within themselves, This was he whom
 “we had sometimes in derision, and a proverb
 “of reproach. We fools accounted his life
 “madness, and his end to be without honour.
 “How is he numbered among the children of
 “God, and his lot among the Saints?”

Wisdom of Solomon v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

When God appears, all nature shall adore him;

While sinners tremble, saints rejoice before him.

*The following HYMN, sent by a Friend,
was sung at his Interment.*

- 1 **F**AR from affliction; toil, and care;
The happy soul is fled,
The breathless clay shall slumber here—
Amongst the silent dead.
- 2 Slowly his earthly frame decay'd,
His end was long in sight,
Nor was his steady soul afraid
To take its awful flight.
- 3 The Gospel was his joy and song:
E'en to his latest breath;
The truths he had maintain'd so long;
Were his support in death.
- 4 Now he resides where Jesus is,
Above this dusky sphere;
He was no stranger to the bliss.
While he sojourned here.
- 5 His body rests beneath the ground
Till that tremendous day;
When the last trump shall give the sound:
To rouse his sleeping clay.
- 6 The Church's loss we all deplore,
And shed the grateful tear;
We shall behold his face no more
Till Jesus shall appear.
- 7 But we are hast'ning to the tomb;
Oh, may we ready stand,
Then, dearest Lord, receive us home—
To dwell at thy right-hand.

THE END.

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THE END